

Region 1 Fact Sheet

Geographic summary

States: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Tribes: Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indians - Indian Township Reservation, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indians - Pleasant Point Reservation, Penobscot Indian Nation, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Mohegan Tribe, Mashpee Wampanoag

Logistics

Regional Office headquarters: Boston, MA

Field offices: N/A

Laboratory: Chelmsford, MA

Staff: Enacted FTE 540.7, projected utilization 512.1.

Top environmental priorities and challenges

- **GE-Housatonic River Cleanup in MA:** The Region is currently taking public comment on its revised cleanup plan (in a Revised RCRA Permit Modification) to address risks posed by PCB contamination in the Housatonic River in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Region expects to make a final decision on the cleanup plan in the fall of 2020, and upon issuance, the Permit Modification is highly likely to be challenged before the EAB and potentially the First Circuit. Although the Region's proposed cleanup plan is based on a mediated settlement agreement the Region reached with seven challengers to EPA's 2016 cleanup plan, including the Permittee General Electric Company, the State of Connecticut, two environmental organizations, and the six Massachusetts municipalities most affected by the River contamination, there remains some significant community opposition to the plan.
- **Direct Implementation of Clean Water Act responsibilities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire:** Region 1 oversees the implementation of the CWA NPDES program in these two states. This work includes providing assistance and assuring compliance with CWA requirements across thousands of regulated facilities. In addition to managing all data and reporting from these facilities, Region 1 oversees complex, long-term, multi-million-dollar infrastructure projects implemented to reduce the impacts of pollutants to waters used for drinking, fishing and swimming. The Region is committed to an ambitious plan to reduce the backlog of expired NPDES permits in MA & NH. Implementing this program, including staffing to avoid legal challenges, especially in light of the Maui decision, remains a challenge.
- **Eastern MA stormwater petitions:** EPA needs to respond to petitions from environmental groups asking the agency to find that a wide range of properties in the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset River watersheds are contributing to water quality problems in those rivers, and should be required to obtain NPDES permits for their storm water discharges.
- **Cape Cod nitrogen issues:** EPA has been working closely with MassDEP to address nitrogen-driven algae blooms on Cape Cod, with the state taking the lead since virtually all of the nitrogen is discharged to

groundwater. An environmental group has filed notices of intent to sue private properties and a municipality for failure to obtain an NPDES permit, alleging that these groundwater discharges are the functional equivalent of a direct discharge pursuant to the Supreme Court's recent *Maui* decision

- **PCBs in Schools and Buildings:** PCBs in building materials, particularly schools, continues to be a focus of political and press attention and heightened community concern in New England. The number and range of buildings and other structures identified with PCBs in manufactured building materials continues to grow, with a significant inventory in New England, posing potential risks to building inhabitants since off-gassing can result in unacceptable levels of PCBs in indoor air. Limitations in the regulatory framework for managing PCBs in building materials complicates effectively managing this challenge.